

## Being Content.

Living as we do in a world of increasing financial prosperity, (or at least it used to be) it's easy to get caught up in the assumption that more money is what we have to have in order to be more happy. We take it for granted that a higher standard of living will bring with it more peace of mind, greater joy, and a measure of relief from the problems that hurt our families.

The only problems money will solve, however, are money problems. And since most of our more serious problems have nothing to do with money, we should not be so foolish as to think that a higher standard of living will make our homes any happier. It may be un-American to say so, but a greater abundance of this world's goods may make our families less happy! Though we never foresee it, more money often brings with it worse problems than we had to start with. As Solomon observed, "The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eats little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer (permit) him to sleep" (Eccl. 5:12). The happiest families are not the wealthiest; they are the families that are grateful for whatever they have, whether much or little, and are able to enjoy life whether or not they ever have any more that at present. It is not wealth itself, but a godly attitude toward wealth that produces peace of mind and gladness in the family.

We can't have read the Bible very thoughtfully if we've not noticed that in the history of God's people the times of greatest prosperity were the times of spiritual decline. In Deut. 8:11-20, the people of Israel were warned about the surprising possibility. While logic and common sense might have predicted that the more the people were blessed by God, the more thankful and reverent they would be. But human nature often defies logic, and the actual history of Israel reflects what most of us are familiar with in our own experience. The more we have, the more we take it for granted and the unhappier we seem to be. It all just bears out the truth of the adage that "hunger is the best sauce."

Lately, lots of folks around the country have jumped on the "simple

lifestyle” bandwagon, no doubt as a reaction to the materialistic excesses of recent decades. Perhaps the social pendulum is swinging back in a more modest direction. But fads notwithstanding, there really is a grain of truth in the “less is more” slogan. Sometimes “the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light” (Lk. 16:8). If secular-minded people are discovering the emotional disadvantages of affluence and making the necessary adjustments, why do we who profess to love the Lord have such a hard time dealing with scriptural warnings about wealth? Covetousness can become a family killjoy!

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